

True Blue Friends

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Summary: George has a hull check up, but he doesn't want to go to it, as he's afraid. Can Theodore help him by doing the right thing?

(Adaption of the episode requested by tate310)

True Blue Friends

It had been a normal, 'not much exciting things happening today' kind of day in the Big Harbour; the sort of day an adventurous person dreads, except for George. He was going round and round in circles when Theodore sails in.

"George, may we practice driving backwards today?" He asks politely.

George is too busy muttering about something, so Theodore gives a short sharp blast from his whistle. George, surprised, stops muttering.

"Hello Theodore." He says.

"Hey George. May we practice steering backwards today?" The little harbour tug repeats.

"No I can't! I have something more important to worry about!"

"How about tomorrow?"

"Don't even mention tomorrow!" Huffed George, and he left, now muttering inaudible things about tomorrow.

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So a very curious Theodore went to find out what was happening tomorrow.

"Foduck, what's tomorrow?"

"Well, one morrow plus another morrow is tomorrow." Chuckled Foduck.

"I'm serious! What is happening tomorrow?"

The safety tug frowned.

"Well, not much, except George is getting his hull check up tomorrow."

Theodore guesses that that must be the reason why George was acting strange.

He leaves Foduck and decides to find George.

He searches and searches but his friend wasn't there. Theodore is about to give up when he sees a smokestack in the distance. It belonged to George.

Very quickly, Theodore follows George to Dock No. 9 - a scrap dock which was almost never used anymore.

He watches as his friend squeezes in by a barge filled with scrap metal.

"There! No one will find me here!" He says to himself triumphantly.

Just then, the barge rolls in closer, and hits George, trapping him between the dock and the barge.

"Help!" George cries out, before he realises that he is alone.

"Oh dear! No one will find me now..." He moans. George feels very, very close to tears, which is something he does not give into at all.

Suddenly, he sees someone peeking round the barge.

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"Theodore!"

"Don't worry, George, I'll get you out of there!" Theodore cries, before buttoning his tow rope to George.

With a heave and a pull, he saves his friend from the tight squeeze.

"Phew! Thanks Theodore!" The big tug tells him in relief.

"What were you doing, George?" Theodore asks, curiously.

"Can you a secret?" George asks.

"Yes." Replies Theodore. "And I promise not to tell anyone." He adds earnestly.

"Well, I've got my hull check up tomorrow..."

"Oh, I know that!" Theodore admits reassuringly.

"...so I plan to hide here tomorrow so I don't have to go to it." The Valiant tug explains.

Poor Theodore didn't like the plan one bit. But he had promised to keep George's secret. So he had no choice but to be quiet, or else he wouldn't be a 'true blue friend.'

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Next morning, Emily asked Foduck and Theodore if either had seen George. Theodore, remembering the promise, truthfully told Emily that he hadn't seen George today.

Just then, Pearl the pilot boat arrived.

"I need you three to tug a scrap shipwreck." She announces. "Follow me."

So the three tugs followed Pearl.

She soon lead them to a scary looking rusty old boat, and everyone buttoned their tow ropes on.

"Where's this going?" Theodore asked.

"Dock No. 9." Answered Emily.

Theodore was now very worried. That was where George was hiding!

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When they arrived, Pearl told them to push the scrap boat in.

Foduck and Emily both pushed hard, but Theodore began pulling instead of pushing.

"Theodore! You're meant to be pushing, not pulling!" Pearl shouts.

"Emily, how important would you say keeping a secret is?" Asks Theodore.

"Well, if anyone was blab my secrets, they wouldn't be my friend." Emily answers in a serious voice.

"What if they were in danger?" The harbour tug inquires.

"That would be different. Sometimes one has to consider if the secret or safety is more important."

This sets aside any resolve to keep the secret. He knew that one word could save George from getting crushed by the scrap barge...

"Stop!" Theodore shouts.

Surprised, both Emily and Foduck stopped, and slowly backed away.

"George is hiding there!"

From behind the scrap barge, emerges a large tugboat. It was George!

"I'm glad to be out of there." Said George. "I was beginning to feel squeezed."

"George, what were you doing there?" Foduck inquires curiously.

"I was avoiding my hull check up." George explains. "I...I'm afraid to get it." He added, in a soft, near whisper tone.

But George noticed that as he told his friends the reason for his secret, he felt as though a burden had lifted from inside him. He smiled at Theodore.

"If you want, George, we could go with you." Theodore offered helpfully.

But George said nothing, and instead left the dock.

The others wondered what George's next course of action was.

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Later, the three tugs decided to check up on George and see how the appointment was going.

Once they finished their job, they went straight to the Marine yards, where they all began hearing a strange sound - like crying?

Confused and concerned, the three tugs went behind a ship...to see George on the dry dock, laughing! He was ticklish!"

"Hehee that tickles!" He exclaimed whilst his friends watch him, still bemused.

On realising what he was saying, George morphs his expression into his traditional serious expression. "After all, we do have to be ship-shape for work here!"

And so Theodore, Emily and Foduck all laugh heartily, whilst George's face lights up in the biggest smile in the Big Harbour.

End
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